

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) In the fabrication of an integrated circuit, a method for removing etching assist gas from a fabrication system used during defect repair of a photomask, comprising:

- (a) inspecting the photomask and detecting a defect, said defect in a defect region; and
- (b) repairing said defect, wherein ~~an amount, effective for the purpose of the etching assist gas is minimized by reaction with~~ styrene ~~is added to the system which is effective for the repair, and the defect is an opaque defect.~~

2. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the etching assist gas is xenon fluoride.

3. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the amount of styrene added to the etching assist gas is about 0.8 torr.

4. (canceled)

5. (original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the etching assist gas is used with ion beam scan during photomask repair.

6. (currently amended) A method for reducing surface defects present on a photomask in an integrated circuit fabrication system, comprising:

- (a) inspecting the photomask and detecting a defect, said defect in a defect region; and
- (b) repairing said defect, wherein ~~an amount, effective for the purpose of the etching assist gas is minimized by reaction with~~ styrene ~~is added to the system which is effective for the repair, and the defect is an opaque defect.~~

7. (original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the etching assist gas is xenon fluoride.

8. (original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the amount of styrene added to the etching assist gas is about 0.8 torr.

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the etching assist gas is used with ion beam scan during photomask repair.

11. (currently amended) A method for reducing gas remaining on an MOS film of a photomask in an integrated circuit fabrication system, comprising:

- (a) inspecting the photomask and detecting a defect, said defect in a defect region; and
- (b) repairing said defect, wherein ~~an amount, effective for the purpose of the etching assist gas is minimized by reaction with~~ styrene ~~is added to the system which is effective for the repair, and the defect is an opaque defect.~~

12. (original) The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the etching assist gas is xenon fluoride.

13. (original) The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the amount of styrene added to the etching assist gas is about 0.8 torr.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) The method as recited in claim 11, wherein the etching assist gas is used with ion beam scan during photomask repair.